OLMOS CREEK:
A GUIDE TO CREEK RESTORATION

The clean-up and restoration of inner-city creeks can provide significant environmental improvements, economic benefits and an enhanced quality of life for citizens. A beginning point is defining "creek restoration." Restoration is returning a creek to a balanced condition where it is not excessively eroding or depositing sediment. It also refers to returning the creek's natural physical features and ecology. Creek restoration is not just landscaping or a channel improvement project. It is an integrated approach to strengthen stream banks; to re-create the habitat for the species of birds, fish, and mammals that once used the site; and to modify the stream's width, depth, or meander to help restore balance between the sediment load the stream must move and the flow velocities needed to move the load through the system. Generally, creek restoration strategies should employ the following:[1]

- Environmentally Sensitive Flood and Erosion Control Solutions
- Environmentally Sensitive Maintenance Strategies
- Replacing Culverts and Concrete Lined Channels with More Natural Environments
- Improving Water Quality, and Habitat for Stream Life

Many successful neighborhood creek restoration projects often begin with small watershed projects such as school tours, tree planting, and do-it-yourself stream bank repair projects that educate the community. Likewise, neighborhoods can advocate for larger projects jointly undertaken by local governments and federal agencies. The restoration of urban creeks can provide a range of benefits to a community:

- Reduces flood damage
- Reduces stream bank erosion
- Preserves a historic or cultural resource
- Encourages the return of wildlife in urban areas
- Develops pedestrian and bicycle trails
- Upgrades the quality of life in neighborhoods
- Restores local identity
- Provides greenbelts, open spaces, and parks
- Creates interesting educational opportunities for schools
- Revives depressed commercial areas
- Creates meaningful jobs
- Protects property values
- Returns public life to waterfronts

ATTACHMENTS: 1) AQUATIC ECOSYSTEM RESTORATION (U.S. ARMY CORPS OF ENGINEERS PROGRAM) 2) SAMPLE LETTER OF INTENT 3) SAN ANTONIO PARKS AND RECREATION DEPARTMENT GREENWAY/LINEAR PARK PROPERTY CRITERIA

[1] Ann L. Riley. Restoring Streams in Cities: A Guide for Planners, Policymakers, and Citizens. Washington D.C.: Island Press, 1998.